

Greens (Kale, Swiss Chard, Spinach, etc.)

Trim off any tough ribs. Blanch for 2 minutes (3 for collard greens). Cool and chop, if desired. Pack in freezer-safe containers.

Peas Shell and discard any immature or tough peas. Blanch for 1 ½ minutes. Tray freeze.

Pumpkin, Winter Squash Must be frozen fully cooked. Remove seeds and cut into sections. Cook until soft on stove top or oven. Remove pulp from rind and mash before freezing.

Summer Squash, Zucchini Grate or shred summer squash and zucchini. Blanch 15 seconds in boiling water. Freeze in 1-cup portions for muffins and quick-breads or to thicken tomato sauce. Or cube in ½-inch pieces and blanch 1-2 minutes, until translucent. Tray freeze.

Tomatoes Dip in boiling water for 30 seconds to loosen skins. Peel and remove cores. Freeze whole or in pieces. For stewed tomatoes, remove stems, peel and quarter. Cover and cook until tender (10-20 minutes). Cool and then freeze. Can also freeze whole tomatoes without blanching on a tray, then put in freezer bags. When thawing, run under warm water and remove skin.

Additional Resources

Preserve Food

www.preservefood.com

National Center for Home Food Preservation

www.uga.edu/nchfp

Preserving Summer's Bounty: A Quick Guide to Freezing, Canning, Preserving and Drying What You Grow (Rodale 1998)

About City Market, Onion River Co-op

The Onion River Co-op is a consumer cooperative with over 4,000 members, selling wholesome food and other products while building a vibrant, empowered community and a healthier world, all in a sustainable manner. Located in downtown Burlington, Vermont, City Market provides a large selection of local, natural and conventional foods, and thousands of Vermont-made products. Open 7 days a week from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., City Market is the 2nd largest co-op in the United States by sales volume. Members join for only \$15 annually and enjoy benefits such as annual patronage refunds and store discounts.

**Front cover image adapted from
Preserving Summer's Bounty (Rodale 1998)*



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82 South Winooski Avenue

Downtown Burlington, VT 05401

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Freezing



Freezing summer and fall produce is a fast, easy way to save money and stock up on healthy, delicious-tasting food. Check out these tips for how to freeze your favorite fruits and vegetables. To get the best deals, buy them at the peak of their season, or go straight to the source (farm or orchard) to pick your own. Look inside for tips on how to freeze all your favorite local fruits and vegetables.




Freezing Fruits

It's easy to freeze many local fruits, like blueberries, which go straight from the berry bush to the freezer. Other fruits need some special handling for best results. If you plan to use just part of a batch of frozen fruit, it's often a good idea to spread it on a tray to freeze to prevent it from clumping together. Then pour into a freezer-grade bag or container. Some fruits discolor during freezing. To offset this, you can add a little ascorbic acid, vitamin C, or lemon juice before freezing. Adding a sweetener like honey, sugar, or sugar syrup also helps preserve the color and texture of some fruit. Look at the list below to see how to freeze your favorite fruits. Frozen fruit will keep in the freezer for about 9 months.

Apples Peel, core and slice apples. Freeze on a tray and transfer to freezer bags once frozen. To prevent browning, drizzle the apple slices with a little lemon juice or ascorbic acid prior to freezing (1/2 tsp. ascorbic acid/3 Tbs. water per quart). Or dip in a solution made of 1 cup of honey, 1 cup of water, and the juice of 1 lemon. For pies, measure 6 cups sliced apples and sweeten with sugar and spices before freezing. You may also consider cooking the pie filling, then freezing.

Apricots Rinse and pit. You may blanch and peel by dipping in boiling water for 30 seconds. If desired, sweeten with 1/2 cup sweetener per quart. Pitted fruits make wonderful compotes (fruit stews) or sauces in the winter.

Berries (Strawberries, Blueberries, Raspberries, etc.) Rinse berries and drain well. Spread berries on tray and freeze until solid. Then pour into plastic freezer bag or a freezing container. Blueberries do not need to be tray frozen, they can go straight into a bag.



Cherries Rinse and remove stems and pits. If sweetening is desired (sour cherries) use 2/3 cup sugar per quart. To prevent darkening, use 1/2 tsp. ascorbic acid/3 Tbs. water per quart.



Grapes De-stem, wash and place in freezer bags or containers. For seeded grapes, slice in half and remove seeds before freezing.

Melons Cut melons in half and remove seeds. Cut into cubes. Pack in freezer bags or containers. To make a quick sorbet, blend the chunks in a food processor with a little lemon juice and sugar and serve right away. Or purée melon before freezing with 1/4 cup lemon juice per quart. Top thawed puree with fresh chopped fruit and yogurt.

Peaches, Nectarines Peel peaches by dipping in boiling water for 1 minute, then placing under cold water. The skins should slip off easily. (You may leave on the skins of nectarines). Slice or leave whole. To avoid darkening, add a small amount of lemon juice or ascorbic acid and pack in a sweetener (1/4 tsp. ascorbic acid and 1/2 cup sweetener per quart). You can also freeze whole without blanching (helps preserve the color). Freeze on tray, then pack in freezer-safe bags. To thaw, run boiling water over them and remove skins and pits.

Pears Peel, halve and core. Heat in boiling sugar syrup for about 1 1/2 minutes. Stir in 3/4 tsp. ascorbic acid to each quart of syrup. Pack in syrup.

Plums Rinse and remove pits. Freeze whole or in slices. To prevent darkening, add a little lemon juice or ascorbic acid. Can also add 1/2 cup sweetener per quart. You can also freeze plums as a purée for sauce. Purée fruit with or without skins. Add 1/4 tsp. ascorbic acid per quart of fruit.



Rhubarb Rinse well and trim ends. Cut stems in 1/2 to 1 inch pieces. May add up to 1 cup sugar per quart.

Freezing Vegetables

Most vegetables must be blanched in boiling water for a short time. Follow the blanching time exactly for best results. Drain and cool very quickly in an ice bath before freezing. Then gently roll in a dish towel if extra water still clings to them. Chunky vegetables are best frozen on trays so they don't clump together, then put into freezer-safe containers. To speed up freezing time, don't over pack containers and distribute multiple containers throughout the freezer.

Asparagus Cut off any tough ends. Blanch for 2-4 minutes depending on thickness of stalk. Tray freeze, then pack into freezer-safe containers.

Bell Peppers Wash, cut out stems, cut in half and remove seeds. Cut in strips, dice, or rings. Tray freeze, then pack into freezer-safe containers.

Beets Beets must be frozen fully cooked. Cook 30-45 minutes or until tender. Cut into smaller pieces if desired and cool before freezing.

Broccoli, Cauliflower Cut into 2-inch pieces. Blanch for 3 minutes. Tray freeze.

Carrots Peel and cut into 1/4-inch cubes or slices. Blanch for 2-3 minutes. Tray freeze.

Corn Place whole cobs in boiling water for 4 minutes. Cool and cut off kernels with knife. Scrape off pulp for creamy-style corn. Tray freeze.

Green Beans Snap off ends and cut beans into 2-inch lengths. Blanch for 3 minutes. Tray freeze.